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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4897

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1. WE ANTICPIATE DEPARTMENT WILL BE UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO COMMENT ON VIETNAMESE ELECTIONS AS WE ARE HERE ALSO. WE SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING PCINTS, WHICH WE WILL BE USING AS APPROPRIATE HERE.

2. THE ELECTIONS ARE VERY SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. THE PEOPLE OF VIET NAM AND THEIR GOVERNMENT ARE TO BE CONGRATULATED ON THS PROGRESS.

3. THE HIGH VOTER TURNOUT DESPITE VERY CONSIDERABLE VIET CONG TERROR TESTIFIES TO THE RARE COURAGE OF THIS PEOPLE AND TO THE IMPORTANCE THE VIETNAMESE ATTACH TO THE BUILDING OF DEMOCRATIC

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INSTITUTIONS. IN AT LEAST ONE INCIDENT VOTERS WHO WERE WOUNDED BY VIET CONG TERRORISTS WHILE THEY WERE AT THE POLLS RETURNED TO THE POLLS AFTER BEING TREATED.

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4. JUDGING BY THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO US, THE ELECTIONS WERE GENERALLY FREE OF IRREGULARITIES. THERE ARE OF COURSE LEGAL MEANS AVAILABLE UNDER THE CONSTITUTION AND THE ELECTORAL LAW BY WHICH ANY COMPLAINTS CAN BE REGISTERED AND ACTED UPON. THE ASSEMBLY WILL PASS FINAL JUDGEMENT ON THE VALIDITY OF THE ELECTIONS.

5. THE VIET CONG WENT ALL OUT TO DISRUPT AND DISCREDIT THE ELECTIONS. IT IS A SIGN OF THEIR FEAR OF FREE ELECTIONS THAT THEY MADE USE OF INDISCRIMINATE TERROR WHILE OBSERVERS AND REPORTERS FROM VIRTUALLY THE WHOLE WORLD WATCHED. A FURTHER SIGN OF THEIR FEAR OF THE POLITICAL APPEAL OF A FREELY ELECTED GOVERNMENT IS HANOI'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION OF A "NEW" NLFSV PROGRAM FOR SOUTH VIET NAM WHICH INCLUDES PROMISES OF ELECTIONS AND THE WRITING OF A "CONSTITUTION." THIS IS CLEARLY A DEFENSIVE REACTION.

6. IF ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE HEAVY VOTE FOR TRUONG DINH DZU, WE INTEND TO SAY THAT WE WERE SURPRISED BUT DO NOT HAVE ANY FURTHER

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COMMENT ON THAT DEVELOPMENT AT THIS TIME. IF PRESSED FOR A STATEMENT ON DZU'S "PEACE" DRIVE WE WILL OBSERVE THAT PEACE AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT WAS ONEOF THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES IN THE ELECTION, AN ISSUE THAT ALL CANDIDATES DISCUSSED. THIS IS A GOOD THING BECAUSE THE SEARCH FOR PEACE IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN. IT IS PARTICULARLY THE CONCERN OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TODAY. WE WILL AVOID ANY STATEMENT WHICH COULD BE READ AS EITHER AN ENDORSEMENT OR A REJECTION OF DZU AND HIS PROGRAM#

7. IF ASKED ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE VOTE FOR THIEU-KY, WE WOULD NOTE THAT IN A FIELD OF 11 CANDIDATES 35 PERCENT IS QUITE RESPECTABLE. THE FACT IT WAS NOT HIGHER CAN ON THE OTHER HAND BE CITED AS ANOTHER SIGN OF THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTION. WE WOULD OTHERWISE AVOID BEING DRAWAN INTO EVALUATIONS OF THE THIEU-KY MANDATE IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF VOTES CAST OR WHAT MAY FOLLOW (THIS LATTER POINT IS FOR THEM TO COMMENT ON.) WE WILL POINT RATHER TO THE FACT THAT THEY WERE FAIRLY ELECTED AND THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT NOW HAS A DEMONSTRABLY DEMOCRATIC

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BASE WHICH GIVES THEM THE RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, SOMETHING WHICH HANOI AND CERTAINLY THE NLF HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO CLAIM.

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